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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## South Dakota's 82nd CST activated to support Hurricane Ike relief efforts

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team (Weapons of Mass Destruction), headquartered in Rapid City, was directed to provide environmental quality support for relief operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike in southeast Texas on Tuesday, Sept. 23.

This is the first activation of South Dakota's Civil Support Team since the unit became certified in July 2007.

Seventeen members from the 82nd CST, along with five members from the 81st CST, North Dakota National Guard, will support the 6th CST of the Texas National Guard and the Texas State Commission on Environmental Quality with liaison, communications interface and HAZMAT survey assessment missions in the vicinity of Houston for the next two weeks.

The CST's mission will be to maintain communication equipment that allows for enhanced interoperability between military and civilian communication devices. The unit will also help identify substances that have washed ashore along the coast of Texas or have been displaced on the mainland in the wake of the storm, and advise civilian authorities on substance disposal.

The unit will be relieving the 72nd CST from Nebraska that is currently augmenting the 6th CST operating in Texas. The 82nd was conducting training with the 81st in Bismarck, N.D., when the request for support came in from the National Guard Bureau in Washington D.C. earlier today.

According to Maj. John Emick, commander of the 82nd CST, the unit trains often with civil support teams from other states for this type of scenario. He said working with other teams and personnel from other states increases the readiness and effectiveness of units that must be able to work together.

While CSTs were originally designed for response to a WMD event, Emick said after Hurricane Katrina, Congress changed the charter of these specialized units to allow for response to natural disasters.

The 82nd CST is one of 55 teams across the U.S. and its territories designed to integrate with the Incident Command System in support of a local incident commander, providing a crucial capability between the initial local response and that of follow-on federal assets.

Using special military and commercial detection and communication equipment, the 82nd can provide rapid analysis of unidentified substances; to include chemical or radiological hazards and identification of biological agents.

This full-time National Guard force is comprised of both Soldiers and Airmen which are on call 24-hours, seven days a week. The unit is stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base and is comprised of command, medical, hazard materials, communications, logistics and administration personnel.

The 82nd Civil Support Team is mainly designed to augment local and regional terrorism response capabilities in events known or suspected to involve WMD. WMD events are incidents involving hostile use of chemicals (such as nerve or blister agent), biological (for example, anthrax), or radiological agents. The team can be enroute within 90 minutes to support civil authorities in the event or suspicion of a WMD attack.

Specifically, the CST deploys to an area of operations to support civil authorities at an incident site by:

- identifying agents/substances.
- assessing current and projected consequences.
- advising on response measures and with appropriate requests for additional support. The unit also advises civilian responders regarding appropriate response actions.
- assisting requests for assistance to expedite arrival of additional state and federal assets to help save lives, prevent human suffering, and mitigate great property damage.

**FOR INFORMATION**, please contact Capt. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6978, cell (605) 431-0621.

**Photo Cutline:**



**060830-A-5701M-047** - Sgt. Joe Bauman, 82nd Civil Support Team, South Dakota National Guard ,clears a safe boundary area with a multi-radiation photo ionizer detector during a Weapons of Mass Destruction exercise. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Matthews.) (Released)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/060830-A-5701M-047.jpg>



**060830-A-5701M-002** - South Dakota National Guard 82nd Civil Support Team participates in an Weapons of Mass Destruction exercise hosted at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota in preparation for the units certification. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Matthews.) (Released)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/060830-A-5701M-002.jpg>

**NOTE 1:** Since the terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 1,000 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

Currently, more than 530 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations throughout Southwest Asia. More than 3,600 National Guardsmen are available in South Dakota to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.